



Surface Transportation Board

Section of Environmental Analysis

October 2003

Central Utah Rail Project

On July 30, 2001, the Six County Association of Governments (SCAOG), a regional association representing Juab, Millard, Sevier, Sanpete, Piute, and Wayne Counties in central Utah, filed a petition with the U.S. Surface Transportation Board (Board) for authority to construct and operate a new rail line that would connect Levan and Salina, Utah. Because of the potential impacts this project could have on the surrounding environment, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) requested that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared. An EIS describes the proposed project, alternatives, the existing environment in the project area, and the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives. The Board published a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS on Sept. 30, 2003.

The Board is asking the public and agencies with interests in the corridor to submit comments explaining what issues they would like analyzed in the EIS and what their concerns or ideas are regarding the operation of the new rail line. This handout explains what issues are typically studied in an EIS, details the Board's environmental review process, and explains how individuals can submit their questions and comments to the Board. A map of the proposed project alignments is shown on page 4. Your comments help determine what issues need to be studied. Let us know what questions or concerns you have.

What is the Surface Transportation Board?

The Board is an independent adjudicatory federal agency with jurisdiction over certain surface transportation economic regulatory matters. This agency is responsible for granting authority for the construction, operation, and maintenance of new rail lines. Accordingly, the Board, through its Section of Environmental Analysis, is the lead agency responsible under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for preparing the Central Utah Rail Project (CURP) EIS, which identifies and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and alternatives.

The history of rail service in the Sevier Valley

The former Denver & Rio Grande Western (D&RGW) railroad provided rail service to the central Utah counties of Sanpete, Sevier, and Piute over the Marysville branch (see map on page 4) of the D&RGW until April 1983, when a major landslide buried the D&RGW's main line just west of Thistle. The D&RGW constructed a new line that same year, but high spring runoff caused washout damage at many other locations along the rail line. Due to the high costs of reconstruction, the D&RGW filed for abandonment in 1984.

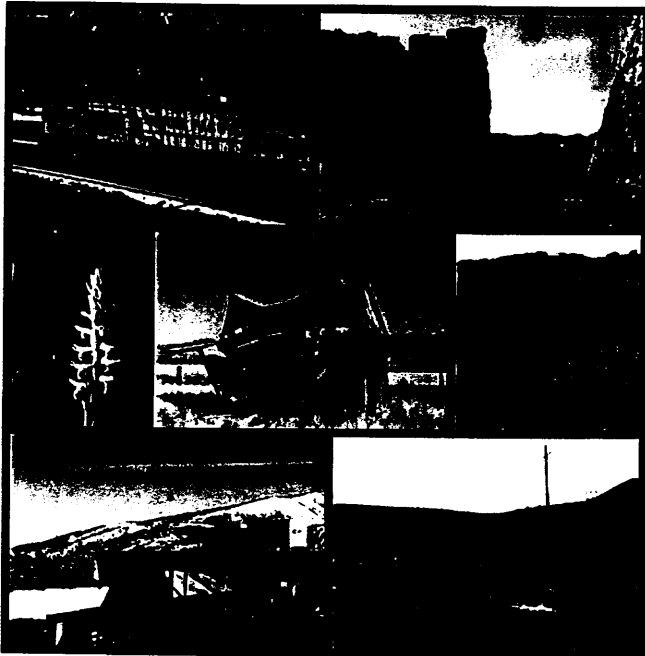
Since 1983, shippers in the Sevier Valley trucked their goods to markets or to rail/truck transfer points on local and regional roadways. For example, the Southern Utah Fuels Company (SUFCO) operates a large coal mine in Sevier County and is the Sevier Valley's largest employer. SUFCO's coal production currently exceeds 7 million tons per year. Much of this truck traffic uses SR 10, I-70, SR 89, SR 28, I-15, and SR 50 and passes through the towns of Salina, Centerfield, Gunnison, and Levan. Most of these roads currently carry about 750 trucks per day in each direction, with about 1,500 trucks passing through downtown Salina each day at a rate of about one truck per minute.

What is being proposed?

SCAOG conducted a study of potential rail line routes that would alleviate the coal truck traffic on local roads and highways. Based on the results of the study, the SCAOG applied to the the Board for authority to construct and operate a new single-track rail line through the Sevier Valley.

The proposed 43-mile rail line would begin near Levan and would end near Salina. Coal from the SUFCO mine would need to be trucked to the rail head only, near Salina, greatly reducing the overall trucking requirements on local highways. Although coal would be a primary cargo, the train could haul products for other local and regional shippers.

The proposal currently calls for trains to run twice a day in each direction. The trains would carry between 100 and 110 cars. Each car would carry about 100 tons of coal. The EIS will examine the impacts that these proposed actions would have on the neighboring environment.

Land Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project affect existing and future land uses? 	What is out there? What could be out there? How will this project change that? How can those changes be mitigated?		Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project cause any new safety issues in the corridor? Will the proposed cargo present any safety risks? If so, how will these concerns be mitigated?
Biological Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project impact biological resources (wetlands, wildlife, etc.)? 			Transportation Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project work with other transportation systems in the area? Will other systems benefit from the rail construction?
Water Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project impact any water resources including the water quality of ponds or rivers? 			Cultural and Historic Properties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any historically or culturally significant resources in the area that require special attention?
Geology and Soils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any unique land formations or soils that would be impacted by this project or that will need special attention? 			Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project impact any recreation areas in the corridor? Will rail construction limit access to any recreation areas?
Air Quality <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project change air quality in the area? 			Aesthetics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How will this project change the visual attributes of the area?
Noise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will be the noise impact? 	Energy Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the project impact the distribution of energy resources in the area, including petroleum and gas pipelines and overhead electric transmission lines, or will the project reduce the fuel used to haul coal? 	Socioeconomics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project have any impacts on existing residential, commercial, or industrial properties or future developments in the area? 	Environmental Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will this project have a disproportionate impact on minority or low-income groups in the area?

STB Environmental Review Process

Notice and Scoping

A notice is published explaining the intent to prepare an EIS (9/30/03). Area agencies and the public are invited to give input on what should be studied.

1

(Current stage of the EIS)

Scope of Analysis

SEA issues a draft and final Scope of Analysis for the EIS that incorporates the comments received during scoping.

2

DEIS Preparation

SEA gathers data, completes analysis and prepares the Draft EIS (DEIS) using the project Scope of Analysis, comments received, and agency input.

3

Why are we here tonight?

The purpose of tonight's meeting is to educate the public about the Central Utah Rail Project, engage them in an open dialogue about the project, and encourage them to participate by submitting their questions and ideas about the project for further review.

Please take your time reviewing the display materials presented.

Ask project staff any questions you have regarding the project.

Have the SEA Study Team record your comments and ideas.

Fill out a comment form to ensure that your comments and ideas are considered in the EIS process.

Take a comment form with you and mail it to the address below.

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
STB Finance Docket No. 34075
1925 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Mark your comments:
Attention: Phillis Johnson-Ball
Section of Environmental Analysis
Environmental Filing

Comments must be submitted by **December 8, 2003.**

For more project information, contact Rick Black, 3995 South 700 East, Suite 100, Salt Lake City, UT 84107, or e-mail rick.black@hdrinc.com.

Or call the Central Utah Rail Hotline at (801) 281-8892 ext. 134.

The Web site for the Surface Transportation Board is www.stb.dot.gov.

Presentation Agenda

- Introduction: Phillis Johnson-Ball
 - Who is the Surface Transportation Board and what is their role in this project?
 - What is the intent of the NEPA process?
- Project Overview: Rick Black
 - What is being proposed?
 - Where is the project area?
 - What are the potential alternatives?
 - What will be looked at in the EIS?
 - What's next in the process?
 - How can the public get involved?

The Central Utah Rail Project scoping meetings are structured in an open-house format to allow the full participation and input of interested parties. We encourage you to discuss your issues, concerns, and questions individually with members of the project staff.

Please take the time to submit your comments. Comments need to be received by December 8, 2003 to ensure full consideration in the planning process. Written comments are encouraged, but oral comments can be provided to The SEA Study Team.

Please be courteous of other participants and recognize their right to participate in this scoping process.

Thank you for your cooperation.

DEIS Release

Public Comment Period

The DEIS is released and the public has 45 days to comment.

4

Final EIS (FEIS)

A Final Environmental Impact statement (FEIS) is released incorporating any comments received on the DEIS.

5

Final Decision

After considering the FEIS and all comments received, the Board issues a final decision about whether to grant or deny the proposal.

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